*TIMES TO ZERO ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION

Approximate hours from first drink to zero alcohol concentration levels for MEN

# of drinks	Body Weight in Pounds			
	160	**180**	**200**	**240**
1	2 hrs	1.5 hrs	1 hr	1 hr
2	3 hrs	3 hrs	2.5 hrs	2 hrs
3	4.5 hrs	4 hrs	3.5 hrs	3 hrs
4	6 hrs	5.5 hrs	5 hrs	4 hrs
5	7.5 hrs	6.5 hrs	6 hrs	5 hrs

Approximate hours from first drink to zero alcohol concentration levels for WOMEN

# of drinks	Body Weight in Pounds			
	120	**140**	**160**	**200**
1	3 hrs	2.5 hrs	2 hrs	2 hrs
2	6 hrs	5 hrs	4 hrs	3.5 hrs
3	9 hrs	7.5 hrs	6.5 hrs	5 hrs
4	12 hrs	9.5 hrs	8.5 hrs	6.5 hrs
5	15 hrs	12 hrs	10.5 hrs	8 hrs

As you can see, at the same weight and number of drinks, it takes much longer for women than for men to get to a zero blood alcohol concentration. In addition, for any number of drinks consumed, the lower the person's body weight, the longer it takes alcohol to leave the bloodstream.

*WHAT BENEFITS MAY I GET FROM QUITTING DRINKING?

-Here are 22 benefits that you may experience. You may even be able to think of more!

- ✓ Sleep better
- ✓ More energy
- ✓ Lose weight
- ✓ No hangovers
- ✓ Memory will be better
- ✓ Better physical shape and appearance
- ✓ Reduced risk of injury to yourself and others
- ✓ Reduced risk of high blood pressure and heart disease
- ✓ Reduced risk of liver disease
- ✓ Reduced risk of brain damage
- ✓ Reduced risk of cancer
- ✓ Improved mood
- ✓ Less hassles from family
- ✓ No risk of drunk driving
- ✓ Better work performance
- ✓ More money to spend on other things
- ✓ Fewer fights
- ✓ Less embarrassment
- ✓ Better sexual performance
- ✓ Less guilt
- ✓ Take fewer risks
- ✓ Feel more in control of yourself

FACTS ABOUT DRINKING

VISN 4 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center

Adapted from LIPHA brochure entitled
"Facts about Drinking"

Common Questions and Concerns

***IS ALCOHOL A DRUG?**

-Yes. Alcohol belongs to the class of drugs called sedative-hypnotics. This class of drugs includes Ativan and Xanax. Alcohol is called a **depressant drug** because it **slows down your brain's ability to think** and to make **decisions** and **judgments**.

***IF I ONLY DRINK BEER, DO I STILL NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ALCOHOL PROBLEMS?**

-**All beverages containing alcohol** can lead to alcohol problems. A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and 1-1/2 ounce shot (a single) of distilled spirits, such as gin or whiskey, have **similar amounts of alcohol** and can cause similar adverse effects on the body.

***CAN'T I REDUCE MY DRINKING WIHOUT STOPPING COMPLETELY?**

-Although some people who are not alcohol dependent can cut down on their drinking, those who are **alcohol dependent** are strongly advised to **stop drinking**. It is the safest path.

***I'VE HEARD THAT ALCOHOL IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEART. IS THIS TRUE?**

-If you are **alcohol dependent**, this possible benefit is far outweighed by the numerous medical, psychological, and social risks you take by drinking. You can obtain similar heart protection from **proper diet and exercise**.

***I THOUGHT ALCOHOL WOULD HELP ME SLEEP?**

-Sleep studies show that drinking before going to bed usually makes sleeping problems worse.

***CAN DRINKING BE HARMFUL TO MY PHYSICAL HEALTH?**

-Alcohol is directly associated with many serious health problems. These problems include high blood pressure, liver damage, depression, sexual and reproductive disorders, serious memory loss, fetal alcohol syndrome, and stroke. Alcohol also is implicated in other problems, such as traffic crashes, homicide, suicide, family violence, and injuries.

***HOW DANGEROUS IS MIXING ALCOHOL WITH OTHER DRUGS?**

-It can be very dangerous. Alcohol can interact with medications such as antibiotics, antidepressants, antihypertensives, benzodiazepines, antihistamines, or acetaminophen (Tylenol). The best advice is: **DON'T MIX ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS!**

-On the next page you will find charts for men and women explaining how long it takes alcohol to disappear from the bloodstream (zero blood alcohol concentration). The charts take into consideration the number of drinks consumed and a person's body weight.